



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA – City Manager
FROM: Bob Beatty – Parks & Recreation Director
DATE OF MEETING: March 2, 2026
ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Parks & Recreation

Forestry Department

Downtown flowers have been ordered for 2026. They typically arrive in late May.

Parks

When there hasn't been snow removal, the Parks Department has been working on projects here at the FCC. They have also ordered new picnic table frames and have been assembling them to get ready for spring.

Recreation Department

Youth indoor soccer finished up. Whiffleball and kickball have been advertised, and the youth basketball 1st/2nd-grade clinics are underway. We have started to advertise for spring/summer Little League programming. Next season, we will look to expand the basketball program and offer it in late fall.

River'sEDGE Facility

Team practices began after the new year. We are off to a great start. Teams are fundraising as the cost of playing continues to rise at a rapid rate. We are now \$840 per team for the state tournament alone. We will have our bags tournament and silent auction at RE this Friday. It is a fairly large event, but it can always accommodate more teams. Most teams will begin games on April 18/19.

Falcon Civic Center

The weightroom expansion went really well; the parks staff were able to do most of the demolition, and that left just a little build back to hire out. It is 95% complete, just waiting to start painting it all. The small expansion has made a huge impact on the look and feel of the space. We have received many compliments thus far.

Aquatic Center Facility

Local lifeguard certification has been set. We are hoping for many returners and many new guards for the summer of 2026.

RV Park Facility

The renovation last fall went very well; the street department did a great job on the upgraded pads. The early snow did cost us the opportunity to bring in dirt and seed. This will be pushed to this fall. Just have some potholes to fill this spring. We are searching for a new host/hostess for 2026. We open on March 1, so time is fairly pressed. At this point, we will have to handle the first month internally.

Complex

We have officially hired the new Facility and Program Operation Coordinator. This role will serve many roles within the organization. Main job functions are the operation of the Complex concession stand, the operation of the FCC membership software, and online registration management. This position will also assist with the development and operation of new programming.

Lane Sobieski introduction:

I am excited to begin my role as the Operations and Facilities Coordinator for the City of Independence. I recently earned my Master's Degree in Sports Management and Recreation from the University of Iowa, where I focused on athletic operations, event coordination, and facility management. I also earned my Bachelor's Degree in Sports Management and Leadership with a minor in Business from Lakeland University, where I was a two-sport collegiate athlete in football and baseball.

Throughout my academic and professional experiences, I have developed a strong background in operations, logistics, event setup, and team coordination. While at the University of Iowa, I served as a Football Recruiting Assistant and supported Division I recruiting operations, campus events, and game-day logistics. I also worked as a Softball Analytics Intern and a Teaching Assistant within the Sports Management program, gaining valuable experience in organization, communication, and data-driven decision making.

Prior to graduate school, I grew up in Berlin, Wisconsin, and being raised on a farm instilled in me a strong work ethic, attention to detail, and appreciation for teamwork and service.

I am passionate about creating well-maintained, safe, and welcoming facilities for the community. I look forward to supporting the City of Independence's operations, contributing to efficient facility management, and serving residents with professionalism and dedication

I'm excited to get started and become an active part of the Independence community!

Lane Sobieski

The 2026 Tournament Schedule was set before the new year. We have shifted some to more USSSA rentals, including hosting two weekends of State. Schedule listed below.

April 4	Sandlot Showdown	BSB 9-13u	USSSA
April 11	Queen of Diamonds Showdown	SB 8, 10, 12u	USSSA
April 12	Queen of Diamonds Showdown	SB 14 16 18	USSSA
April 18	Turf Slamfest	BSB 12u	River'sEDGE
April 19	Turf Slamfest	BSB 11u	River'sEDGE
April 25/26	KQ Rumble on Turf	BSB 8-13u	USSSA
May 2	Turf Shootout	SB 9, 10, 11, 12U	River'sEDGE
May 3	Turf Shootout	SB 7, 8 13, 14 15, 16	River'sEDGE
May 9/10	Battle On Turf	BSB 10-12	USSSA
May 16	Cedar Valley Slugfest	SB 9, 10, 13, 14	USSSA
May 17	Cedar Valley Slugfest	SB 8 11, 12 16, 18	USSSA
May 30	Battle on Turf	SB 12 13 14	USSSA
May 31	Battle on Turf	SB 8, 9 10	USSSA
June 6	Turf Showdown	BSB 7/8u	River'sEDGE
June 6	Turf Showdown	BSB 13u	River'sEDGE
June 7	Turf Showdown	BSB 11u	River'sEDGE

June 13/14	Summer Madness	BSB 7-13u	USSSA
June 20/21	Diamond Duel	BSB 7-13	USSSA
June 27	Turf Smackdown	BSB 9u	River'sEDGE
June 28	Turf Smackdown	BSB 7/8u	River'sEDGE
June 28	Turf Smackdown	BSB 13u	River'sEDGE
July 5	Turf Takedown	BSB 11u	River'sEDGE
July 10-12	USSSA State Championships	TBD	USSSA
July 17-19	USSSA State Championships	TBD	USSSA

Cemetery

The Chili cookoff seemed to go well. They had several silent action items and good chili.